

VINEYARD
OF THE

Lord of Hosts,

To be Read in Their MEETINGS.

The BREATHINGS of a PRISONER for the TESTIMONY of JESUS, who in the Deep hath seen the *Afflictions* of his People, and cannot hide his Praise who supports them, nor-with-hold his Complaint because of the hardness of mens hearts, but cries unto the Lord God of Righteous Judgment, for the Deliverance of his own PEOPLE.

With a few Words of *Exhortation* and *Advice*, given forth as a Testimony of my dearest Love to the whole Seed of God; because I cannot otherwise communicate it in this time of my Restraint, I have been the more large, that I may be refreshed with you, and you with me, in the overflowing Fountain of our Life.

By JOHN WHITEHEAD.

Printed in the Year, 1662.

For the VINEYARD *of the Lord of Hosts,*
to be Read in their Meetings.

O Vineyard of the Most High, wherein I have laboured according to the ability which God hath given me since the appearing of the Bright and Morning-Star which hath enlightened the World, in whose Joy I am now at rest, and my Peace is as a River, because I hid not my Talent in the Earth, nor have stood idle in the Market-place, but have improved what was given me for my Master's use; and for the increase and watering of thee his Vineyard, which I cannot in any wise forget now when trouble is near, and all the Beasts of the Field do compass thee about, and with their whole Power do seek to break down thy Hedge, crop off thy Leaves, devour thy Fruit, tread under thy tender Plants, cut off thy flourishing Branches, and make thee as a Wilderness: For in the everlasting Love of one God I think upon thee, remembering the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine Espousals, wherein thou wert betrothed to the Lord with Judgment and Mercy, in the day that thou wast solitary in the Wilderness, and had none to help: my heart is broken within me, and doth with thy breathing Babes and tender Mourners (whose Cry hath reached unto Heaven) send forth these *Breathings*, that in the Spirit of Supplication we may have fellowship together, whilst my soul saith unto God, Surely thou hast not cast off the Beloved of thy Soul, nor sold the Heritage (to be trodden down) for a thing of nought, neither given the Plants of thine own right hand for a Spoil to their Enemies: Shall they then prevail, which come gnashing with their teeth to devour us? and wilt thou let thy Name be blasphemed, wherein thou hast gathered us, in which we do trust? for thy Presence is yet amongst us, and thou withholdest not the Riches of thy Mercy from us, but openest thy Treasure to us; and of thy Fulness we have received Strength, else we could not have escaped in the hour of Temptation, nor

stood upright in the time of our deep Tryals, but when thou sawest us weak, thou turned not away thy Face from us, but ever hast stretched out thy right-hand to uphold us, and hast holpen us with a little help; when we call upon thee, thou bowest down thine ear to hear, and givest us also to understand the words of thy mouth. But why dost thou not shew thy self unto the World, for they understand not thy way? For, though thou hast given thy Light into the World, they love Darkness rather, and that blinds their eyes, that they know not thee, nor us whom thou hast sent, and therefore do persecute and seek to root up, not believing that we are thy pleasant Plants, although thou hast created us anew in thine own Image, and shewed thy Light, Life, Love, Vertue, Power, Patience and good-will towards men, through us, yet do they not consider, but think they do thee good service, when they kill us, all the day long: And when we do speak to them in thy Name, and would turn them from their Envie, Anger, Pride, Covetousness, Murders, Thefts, Lies, Adulteries, Fornications, Oppressions, Injustice, and the evil of their Inventions, unto the Light wherein thy Fulness dwells, that therein they might walk with thee in newness of life; They reject our Testimony, and say we would delude them; and when we do declare thy Righteousness, and shew thy Judgments at hand, because Transgressions are multiplied, and Iniquity drunk up as water, their hearts they harden against us, and mock at fear, neither do they prepare to turn unto thee, but for our love in warning them, give us the water of Affliction to drink; and when we call them that are yet wandring with a heart panting for living water (but being gone astray from thy wayes, do drink of the Whores Cup, or, at best, that Water which men have fouled with their feet) and say, Turn ye again to the Lord, and defile not your selves with the Inventions of men, neither touch any unclean thing, but come forth and *be ye separate*, and our God will be a Father unto you, and you shall be his Children: Then they reproach us as *factious, sowers of Sedition*: but if any do lay it to heart, and believe our Testimony and return, they meet them first with flatteries, then with threats and cruelties, which they spread, as the snares on *Mizpah*, for their feet, like
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the chief Priests, Pharisees, and Lawyers of old, who would
 never enter into the Kingdom themselves, nor suffer those
 that were entering to go on: And when we are gathered in thy
 Name, and do stoutly wait to feel thy Power, that in us we
 may edifie one another, and drink at the Fountain of Life,
 which thou hast opened unto us, without reverence to thy
 Name, they come upon us with open violence to devour thy
 Lambs, merely for drinking at the Fountain: yet, their stroke
 upon us is very cruel, because we love thy Precepts, and can-
 not derogate from the glory of thy Verity, who hast made our
Sea, Sea, and our *Nay, Nay*, and said unto us by thy Son since
 the Law, *Sin not at all*; and though we have given our cheeks
 to the smiter, our bodies to prison, and exposed our goods to the
 spoiler, and patiently borne many other grievous sufferings for
 the Truths sake, whereof thou hast made us Witnesses; yet will
 they not believe those things which thou hast spoken by us, and
 what have we more to seal the Testimony with which thou hast
 given us? unless thou wilt suffer the Whore to drink more of
 the blood of thy Saints, before thou bring thy long and often
 threatened Judgements upon her, who yet fears them not, but
 saith, *I sit a Queen, and am no Widow, neither shall I see any Ser-*
ron: And by what means wilt thou plead with *Babylon* that
 saith she is the *Lady of Kingdoms*, or who shall persuade men
 to fly out from her, that they perish not in her plagues, for
 they are mad upon her *Idols*, and do mock thy Messengers, and
 do shamefully intreat and stone those whom thou hast sent to
 forewarn them, that they may escape the Wrath to come: Yet
 with thee is mercy and forgiveness, and I know thou wouldest
 not their destruction, but rather that they may turn and live:
 Therefore hear my Complaint, and bow thine ear to my Re-
 quest, for I groan within my self, and my spirit breathes that
 thou mayest aile in thy Mighty Power, and speak by thy right-
 eous Judgments, that men may fear before thee, and the
Nations be persuaded to come to thy Light, and Kings to the
 brightness of thy rising. Let thy right hand rent the vail from
 off all hearts, that thy *Salvation* may be shewed openly,
 and *Satan* trodden under foot, for who else is sufficient for
 these things. But in the day of *Indignation*, O Lord, Remem-
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ber thine *Heritage*, and let not thy *Planting* be rooted up, but
 spare thy People, and cause thy tender Plants to grow: Chain
 the Dragon, and let the Earth drink up the floods that would
 hinder thy Spouse from returning out of the Wilderness, where
 her place hath been in the long dark night of Apostacy: but
 since the breaking up of the day, thou hast said unto her that
 fate solitary, I am the Husband of thy youth, therefore walk
 with me, and I will not leave thee nor forsake thee, but lead
 thee unto the Mountain of my House, and my Banner over
 thee shall be Love, and herewith thou hast allured her, and
 she followeth hard after thee: But now, O Lord, our Shep-
 herd, we are compassed about with Adversaries, and grievous
 Wolves are gathered to prey upon thy Lambs, Therefore abide
 thou with us, and break their teeth, O God, that thy Flock
 may not be meat for them; for our expectation is from thee
 alone, and we have not made flesh our Arm, because our hope
 is in thee; neither tribulations nor afflictions can separate us
 from thee, for we have appealed unto thy Righteousness, who
 searchest the hearts and tryest the reins of all men, that thou
 mayest give judgement between us and them, that do afflict
 us; and if thou hast not sent us and commanded us to speak, or
 if in heart we be not innocent towards men, and no way guilty
 of doing or intending those evils wherewith they charge us,
 Then let our hearts fail, and confusion cover us before them in
 the day of our Tryal; but and if thou hast sent us and com-
 manded us to speak, and by thy own Power begotten us into
 an innocent life, Then open thou our lips, and let the words
 of thy mouth break through us, and stick in the hearts of our
 Enemies, that they may be pricked like the Persecutors of old,
 and not have ability to resist the Spirit and Wisdom by which
 thou ledest us: for though we our selves know that we are of
 thee, yet do we patiently wait till thou decide the contro-
 versie, and in the sight of all men shew who are thy People;
 yet can I not cease to breath, that thou mayest shorten
 these dayes of trouble for thy Elect sake, in whom thy soul de-
 lighteth, that no more may be laid upon thy little ones than
 they can bear, lest they faint, and their Adversaries triumph
 and say, *Where is now the God in whom they trusted?* O let them
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know that thou art near, and dost hear the cry of the Oppressed; and upon the Glory of thy Name let there be a defence, and so keep us in it, to the end that it may never be dishonoured.

Now having refreshed my full heart, in spreading our Cause before the Lord, O ye his People bear with me a little, and let your ears be enclined to hear a few things which concerns your peace: for, because I love you, I cannot withhold from you, that is signified unto me, That whilst you are beset with Adversaries on every side, the Enemy will beset himself with all subtilty and violence to make a breach amongst you, and also will tempt to every thing whereby he may weaken you, and let your Adversaries in upon you; but he shall not be able to effect his purpose, whilst youally, in that Faith which worketh by Love, Meekness and Gentleness, do hold the *one Head*, which is Christ the Light, and neither the Planters nor the Waterers: for Him we preached, and in Him we have believed who is the Author of Eternal Salvation from Sin, and perfecter of Man's Redemption up to God, and you are Witnesses that we have not preached up our selves, neither laboured to set up him that planteth, nor him that watereth, as any thing in comparison of the precious Truth of God, for which we now suffer; but in plainness and sincerity, not with wisdom of words, but in the demonstration of the Spirit we have manifested the Life and Power of God, that ye may know, believe, and be guided by it in your selves, and so inherit Rest and Peace with God, and not alwayes stand afar off, in the expectation of somewhat to come; which is an unfetled state, wherein they that stand may easily be deceived with swelling words, or good pretences; wherewith the strange Woman (whose wayes are movable) decketh hir self; lest those whom she seeks to catch in her snare should punder the path of Life, and see that her wayes do lead to the Chambers of death, and that her steps take hold on Hell.

But dearly beloved Friends and Brethren, seeing we know that the Son of God is come by an inward feeling of his Presence in spirit, that hath given us an understanding that is true, and we look not for another, but are rooted and grounded

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in him. O let us not put our confidence in man, and his fleshly word
 loving and patient, and the like of these; but we may ever
 be his Disciples, who is a quickning Spirit, and doth dwell in
 us; then shall we no more wander amongst bryars and thornes
 but shall run straight the Path of the Valley; and drink of the
 Water of Life, as directed alowd by O. bro. I ad. and
 - But Friends, because all of you that are convinced are not
 yet come into the savoury Life, so discern of things that dis-
 senty you must take heed of pretending to judge of things that
 are beyond your measure, for your principle, strength and
 faculty is to be still, and wait for the Light of the Spirit, which
 that both your Faith and Wisdom from above may be increas-
 ed, and that will open you more and more to receive in
 Abundance all that will be your good light, nor reject the Spirit's
 Testimony in the Elders and Brethren, whom God did use as
 Instruments to turn you to him, which will in the same
 Love do watch over your Souls. Neither shall you despise
 Prophecy, nor speak the Spirit that speaks in the mouth of
 Babes, who are of a commanding Spirit, as Friends of the
 Bridegroom, rejoyce to hear his Voice in any Instrument, by
 whom or to whom he speaks in Baptism, his light, he
 left you for his only Instrument above its place, forgive unto
 it any part of the Glory that is due unto him that is left
 left thereby, to lead his Will, and cause jealousy to him
 like a fire; for in his Glory he giveth to and sent forth his
 staff precious Instruments in his hand, he will cast it away
 from him, and suffer it to be trampled under foot as the mire
 of the streets. Therefore be tender of one anothers preserva-
 tion, and let all your affections be guided with Justice, Equi-
 ty and Moderation, so that you never press any above you, nor
 cast down any below their measure, which doth you intend
 to preserve the Body in the unity of the Spirit and bands of
 Peace.

And you that are his Children in simplicity, wait that ye
 also in understanding may be Men, and take heed of being
 so affected with simplicity, as to despise to hate knowledge
 like those to whom Wisdom cryed, and Understanding over-
 ruled her voice, and they would not hear, who stood con-
 ceited

ed in ignorance, till calamity came upon them, like an
 aimed man, but alwayes bow down your ears to the Instru-
 ction of Life, and do the Will of God, that ye may understand
 Doctrine and be of a sound Judgment to try Spirits and Do-
 ctrines, whether they be of God or no: but in so doing, be
 sure to keep your own habitations in a measure of light, and
 see that neither prejudice nor immoderate affections bear sway
 in you, so will you see what stands in Unity with the first
 Principle, by which you were turned towards God, and is ap-
 proved in his Light, and tends to stablish you in Righteous-
 ness that you may safely embrace; but whatsoever doth jar
 with the first Principle, and would dis-settle and remove you
 from the *Light within* (wherein that which may be known of
 God is made manifest) either by drawing into uncooth and
 singular outward Observations, or by promising Liberty, or
 a greater Glory than that which the Light of the Spirit within
 hath given us to behold with open face, as in a Glass, and is
 translating you thereinto; I say, that which by these things
 would work discontent in your present measures, and let
 you loose from waiting in God's Fear, into the comprehen-
 sion of things above your measures, is dangerous, and to be
 eschewed: And if any do hold forth such things, they, as well
 as such which would draw you back into the Rudiments of the
 World, do speak of themselves, and seek their own glory;
 but he whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God, and
 seeketh his Glory that sent him.

- And if Contention, Strife, Wars, or Commotions do arise
 in the Earth, betwixt Man and Man, or People and People
 where you inhabit, dwell you in that Power which hath re-
 deemed you out of the Earth from amongst Men, and that will
 keep you sensible that you are not your own, but bought with
 a price, *that you may be unto God a peculiar People*; And there-
 fore you shall not defile your selves with their Contentions,
 nor strive, nor side with Parties, which fly to that Sword for
 refuge by which they may perish: but we having received
 and trusted in the Sword of the Spirit, by which we can never
 perish, let us sit down in that which keeps holy and harm-
 less, and separate from sinners; so shall his wonderful Coun-

fel, who is Prince of Peace, be with us, wherein we may be Peace-makers; and obtain the blessing to be called *the Children of God*.

And you that are as yet not much exercised with Sufferings, but are at peace in your dwellings, none making you afraid, Take heed lest at any time you be secure; for then may the Enemy intice you from a sence of God's mercy to look out at Creatures; and to set your heart on Earthly things, and then if a tryal come suddenly and unexpected, it will be the heavier upon you; and if through want of preparation ye fall under in it, then it will be hard for you to be raised up again to stand faithful unto the End, whereon your safety and the possession of the Crown of Life depends: and if you be not constant and faithful in these last tryals, you lose your reward, for all that ye have gone through: for, if any do put his hand to the plough, and look back, my soul hath no pleasure in him, saith the Lord. Therefore, as I would that you should not be dismayed, nor fear the Threatnings, Excommunications, Fines and Imprisonments, or any other thing which you may suffer by the wicked hands of mortal men; So would I that you may both inwardly and outwardly be prepared to suffer what man can do unto you: And whilst ye behold the Lord restraining their wrath from breaking out against you, bear a part with your Brethren that are suffering under it, and God shall reckon it to you in the day of your need.

Finally, dear Friends and Brethren, be of one mind, and live in peace, and in the Name of the Lord keep your Meetings, that Love and Life may abound amongst you, and therein faithfully instruct, admonish, and (if need be) reprove one another; but let the Spirit judge all things, and with an open tender heart receive Instruction and Reproof one from another, pondring it in deep silence, and not measuring it in the reasoning part, for that will grow high and work prejudice against the Admonisher and Reprover, if you see not a present cause or need of such a thing, and thereby you may both hurt your selves, and discourage those that in sincerity sought your good, whereby they may be caused in silence to lament when they see you in the like danger, and say, *We called, but they*

they would not bear : therefore measure and bear all things in the meek low spirit. And you that are strong and spiritually minded, being come over all these things, labour to restore and raise up them that fall, and comfort the feeble-minded, and say to them that stand afar off, Draw near and walk with us in the Light, and the Lord will also give you rest ; and wait on your Ministry, that ye may preserve that which is gathered in the savoury Life, to shine as Lights before men ; For there is a Seed sown in this Nation and elsewhere, which begins to bud forth in thousands, who having not seen, yet love ; which gives me sufficient ground to believe that when the Winter is past, and the latter Rain comes upon the Earth, then shall be a plentiful Harvest, wherein every one that hath been faithful in a little, shall reap much, and give thanks unto God which hath blessed the Seed sown, who will send forth such, as in the furnace of Affliction he hath fitted for his use, faithfully to labour, that every eye may be opened to see the common Salvation (that God hath prepared for all People) is the Light that doth enlighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of *Israel*.

Written in *Lincoln-Castle*
the 24th day of the
sixth Month, 1662.

John Whitehead.

THE END.